## **History of the City of Council Bluffs**

French and Spanish explorers and traders were in Council Bluffs for almost a century before the Lewis and Clark expedition stayed five days at White Catfish Camp, known today as Long's Landing. Lewis and Clark later met with Missouri and Otoe Indians ten miles north of Omaha. This historic council in the bluffs provided the model for future meetings with Indians and the name of our city.

The history of Council Bluffs glitters with a parade of famous western explorers, fur traders, military figures, engineers and great Indian nations.

Abraham Lincoln had the foresight to realize Council Bluffs should be the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad. Known as the Gateway of the American West, Council Bluffs has a proud and rich history.

Numerous Indian tribes shared hunting rights in the Council Bluffs area and made great contributions to its history. All of Southwest Iowa was purchased in 1830 by the United States government from the Indians. Between 1847 and 1856, tribes were moved to reservation lands.

More than 30,000 Mormon refugees flooded through Kanesville (Council Bluffs) in the mid-1800s on their way to the Great Salt Lake Valley. The Mormons built more than 80 communities in southwest lowa, organized churches, tuition schools, city and county governments, band and choral concerts and four newspapers. Their scores of businesses boomed when the California Gold Rush of 1849 started flooding through Kanesville.

Kanesville was named for Thomas Kane, a man sympathetic to the plight of the Mormons. Kanesville was renamed Council Bluffs in 1853.

Abraham Lincoln visited Council Bluffs in 1859. He met Grenville Dodge, a railroad engineer and later a Civil War general. This meeting developed a strong friendship. They spent three days discussing the possibility of a coast-to-coast railroad. After elected to the presidency, Lincoln designated Council Bluffs the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad.

A leading citizen of Council Bluffs, Dodge was advisor to Presidents Lincoln, Grant, (Andrew) Johnson, Hayes, McKinley, (Theodore) Roosevelt and Taft. Although he never technically ran for office, Dodge was elected to Congress. His elegant Victorian style Council Bluffs home, where five presidents were overnight guests, is open to the public for tours.

Railroad service came to Council Bluffs in 1867. Eventually, it would be served by seven railroads and became the great mail-handling terminal for the American West. Railroads developed Council Bluffs into a bustling center of commerce. This pattern continues today with a variety of industries thriving in the city.

Today, Council Bluffs, businesses make a national and international impact. Local industry includes frozen foods, robotics, dairy products, plastics, railroading, electrical products and pork and beef packaging, among many other industries.

Recent changes in state law allowed gambling expansion, boosting the local economy and providing hundreds of new jobs.